

HANDOUT 10

TURNING AROUND CHRONICALLY LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS: PLANNING TEMPLATE FOR WORKING WITH DISTRICTS

Planning templates are designed to help technical assistance providers work with educators. This template can help district-level personnel translate the recommendations of the IES Practice Guide *Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools* into actions and policy options, encourage systematic identification of existing strategies or gaps, and establish a coordinated and coherent districtwide plan that addresses the needs of its schools.

AREA OF DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY	CURRENT STATUS			NEXT STEPS
	Already in Place	Not Feasible/ Inappropriate	Potential Areas to Develop	
A. District Leadership <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The district develops and communicates district policies for turning around low-performing schools to all administrators, specialists, and relevant teaching staff. 2. The district evaluates district policies and determines whether adjustments (e.g., waiving some personnel assignment policies) should be made for specific low-performing schools. 3. The district has staff with expertise in turning around low-performing schools and related practices, such as data-based decision-making or turnaround leadership. 4. The district has identified potential resources, including state and federal grant monies, to support recommended practices (e.g., professional development, instructional and planning resources and materials). 				

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	Already in Place	Not Feasible/ Inappropriate	Potential Areas to Develop	
B. Setting Standards and Expectations for Achievement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The district adopts the SEA standards or specifies grade- and topic-specific standards based on the SEA standards if the SEA standards are not explicit. 2. The district conveys to each low- performing school clear expectations for school achievement, including annual and interim goals. 3. The district provides tools and professional development for tracking progress towards achievement goals. 				
C. Providing Research-Based and Effective Instruction in Support of State and District Standards <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The district provides guidance on turnaround practices and interventions advocated or prohibited by the district or state. 2. The district provides information on rigorous evidence of effects of district/state-sanctioned turnaround practices, including any evidence on differential effects for different types of schools. 3. The district provides materials, resources, and training for schools to develop research supported principal and teacher leadership practices. 4. The district provides materials, resources, and training for schools to collect, manage, and use data for instructional improvement. The district approach has been tested and found effective. 5. The district provides materials, resources, and training for schools to help review the curriculum and align it to state standards. The district follows up to ensure that the aligned curriculum is integrated into teaching. 				

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D. Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting High-Quality Staff <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The district provides training and resources for principals to evaluate teachers' strengths and weaknesses. 2. The district provides incentives and district policy waivers to draw—and retain—highly qualified teachers for its lowest-performing schools. 3. The district facilitates targeted professional development for teachers, differentiated according to teachers' needs. 				
E. Using Data for Planning and Accountability <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The district analyzes assessment results, including progress-monitoring data, to identify professional development and weaknesses in the district curricula. 2. The district uses assessment data to help develop and analyze school turnaround plans. 				
F. Promoting Equity/Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on annual review of progress and needs of each school, the district identifies needs for additional staff resources. 2. School progress and needs are factored into decisions about distribution of state and federal funds for school improvement. 				

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G. Engaging Families and Community 1. The district communicates policies for working with low-performing schools to parents and community organizations. 2. The district has established partnerships with community agencies, businesses, and colleges/universities, etc. to obtain resources for teachers to implement practices. 3. The district has developed partnerships with local postsecondary institutions that have the expertise to support low- performing schools in their turnaround efforts.				